

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Vici M-K-T Depot

other names/site number Wichita Falls and Northwestern Railroad Depot; Katy Depot

2. Location

street & number Houser Street, between 7th Street and 8th Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Vici [N/A] vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Dewey code 043 zip code 73859

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ( [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title: [Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer Date: 7-23-07
Oklahoma Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [X] entered in the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] other, explain [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: 9.6.07

Vici M-K-T Depot  
Name of Property

Dewey County, Oklahoma  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Rail Related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE: Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Wood frame combination depot

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD: wood pile

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof ASPHALT: asphalt shingle

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Vici M-K-T Depot  
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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Commerce

Architecture

### Periods of Significance

1910-1945

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Oklahoma Historical Society/SHPO

\_\_\_\_\_

Vici M-K-T Depot  
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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 14 473340 4000560  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing [ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jim Gabbert, architectural historian and Ann Fuhrman

organization Oklahoma Historical Society date 4/2007

street & number 2401 N. Laird Avenue telephone (405) 522-4478

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73107

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name KATY Historical Society c/o Vici Chamber of Commerce

street & number PO Box 102, 107 E. Broadway Street telephone (580) 995- 3425

city or town Vici state OK zip code 73859

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**DESCRIPTION**

The Vici M-K-T Depot is located on the north side of downtown Vici, paralleling the former M-K-T rail line that once bisected the town. The depot is located between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, on the east side of Houser Avenue. To the immediate southeast stands a large, concrete grain elevator. A block south of the main commercial street of Vici. A residential neighborhood is to the north of the depot, while to the east and west, along the railroad right-of-way are industrial or wholesale type buildings. The depot itself is a wood frame, combination type depot with an integrated baggage room. The building is 24 feet 6 inches wide and 88 feet long and features a hipped roof with wide, overhanging eaves supported by knee braces. The main tracks north of the depot and the spurs to the south have been pulled up, leaving the building as an island among grass and weeds growing up through cinders and ballast.

**EXTERIOR**

The Vici M-K-T Depot is a wood-frame, hipped roof combination style depot located on the north edge of downtown Vici. It has a rectangular footprint, measuring 24' 6" by 88' and the building sits on wooden piers. The roof is hipped, sheathed in asphalt shingles, and is pierced by two chimneys along its ridge. A lower, cross gable on the north side covers the square bay. The wide, open eaves are supported by knee braces.

The building is divided into two zones; the westernmost is the passenger zone, with waiting areas and ticket office. The eastern zone is used for freight. The two zones are distinguished from the exterior in two ways: the passenger zone has windows while the freight does not, and the freight zone has an elevated floor, equal to the height of the no longer extant platform.

The depot is sided with wood lap siding with a 3" reveal. All corners have corner boards. A wainscot of vertical board siding belts the depot; the wainscot is 3' in height and is capped by a simple wood rail. The windows of the depot are single hung, 6/6 wooden sash. Window surrounds are all 6", flat boards with no drip caps; the wainscot rail serves as the window sill.

The west elevation measures 24' 6" and consists of two paired window openings. The roof at this end is supported by three knee braces, one at each corner and one centered between the window sets. A modern security light is attached to the eave above the center bracket.

The north elevation formerly faced the track. It is 88' long. At the west end is an entry door topped by a large transom. The wooden six panel door is original. A pair of 6/6 windows is just east of the door, centered between it and the square bay. The bay has a pair of 6/6 windows on its main, or north, wall and the thin side walls have narrow, 4/4 windows. The main window set on the bay is the only fenestration with a drip cap. The bay is sheltered by a wide gable, supported on the sides by knee braces. The peak of the gable has a stick-work pendil. To the east of the bay is a single 6/6 window and another six panel, wood entry door that served the "colored" waiting room. East from this door is the freight section of the depot. Approximately fifteen feet east of the door, the wainscot and floor of the depot ramp up, exposing the wooden piles that support the building. A large, wide, wooden freight door is located approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down the north wall. The sliding door is constructed of wide rails, a central style, and diagonally placed, tongue & groove boards, sometimes referred to as "car siding." The roof along the north elevation has ten knee braces, evenly spaced from corner to corner.

The east elevation has a single freight door centered and four knee braces.

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The south elevation is similar to the north, although the slope of the ramp from freight to passenger zone is longer. A freight door is located twenty feet from the east corner. From the west corner, there is a single six panel door with a three pane transom, then two pairs of 6/6 windows and then a single 6/6 window.

**INTERIOR**

The depot has two zones – the passenger zone and the freight zone. The passenger zone has subdivisions – waiting rooms and the agent's office. Due to the Jim Crow law mandating separate facilities for white and black customers, the Vici depot has two waiting rooms.

The "white" waiting room, 23 feet wide by 20 feet long, can be entered from the outside using one of the two doors on the north and south walls near the west end. The oak walls, doors and floor are the original. The walls and ceiling have the original tongue and groove design with a top and sole plate. Originally, there were five oak benches, two in the center back to back and one on each wall. Today, there are three oak benches, one on each wall. The original red brick chimneys on the roof continue down into the walls of the "white" and "colored" waiting rooms.

The corridor on the south wall leads from the "white" waiting room to the freight and passenger agent's office. The office is 27 feet long and 10 feet wide with ticket counters cut out of the east and west walls. There is a four inch wood molding and counter held up by two carved post brackets on the left and right edges that looked into the agent's office from each waiting room. From the window-like open ticket counter on the west wall looking in from the "white" waiting room the original schedule board can be seen hanging on the east wall. Like the waiting rooms the walls, floor and entrance are the original oak wood. On the north wall there are two six-over-six double hung windows, a four-over-four double hung window on the northwest wall and a four-over-four double hung window on the northeast wall.

Continuing east down the corridor from the freight and passenger agent's office is the "colored" waiting room. The "colored" waiting room is 13 ½ feet long by 11 feet 5 inches wide, with a pine floor and a door with transom window above on the north wall leading outside to a small platform. There were very few if any African Americans living in or traveling through Dewey County, so the waiting room was used for other purposes. After WWII it was used to store cream prior to shipping.

Along the corridor leading to the freight room is the freight office, 8 feet 10 inches wide by 12 feet long, with a desk against the north wall. Continuing down the corridor to the east end of the building and up a small wooden staircase is the freight room. The freight room is 24 feet 6 inches wide and 48 feet long. Inside the original, four-inch oak walls were built six inches from the outside clapboard walls. There is a two inch, oak timber floor and three sliding doors, one each on the east, north and south walls. The original chimney can be seen on the west wall and original graffiti remains on the walls. Shelves on the west and north walls hold memorabilia representing each of the last ten decades of Vici's history. Freight was originally stored on wooden shelves in the center of the room. These shelves have been removed. Originally, wooden, raised platforms reached from the three sliding doors enabled freight to be delivered from trains and stored in the freight room or removed and packed onto the trains. Today, the platforms have been removed.

**ALTERATIONS**

The two primary alterations to the depot have been the removal of the freight platform and the

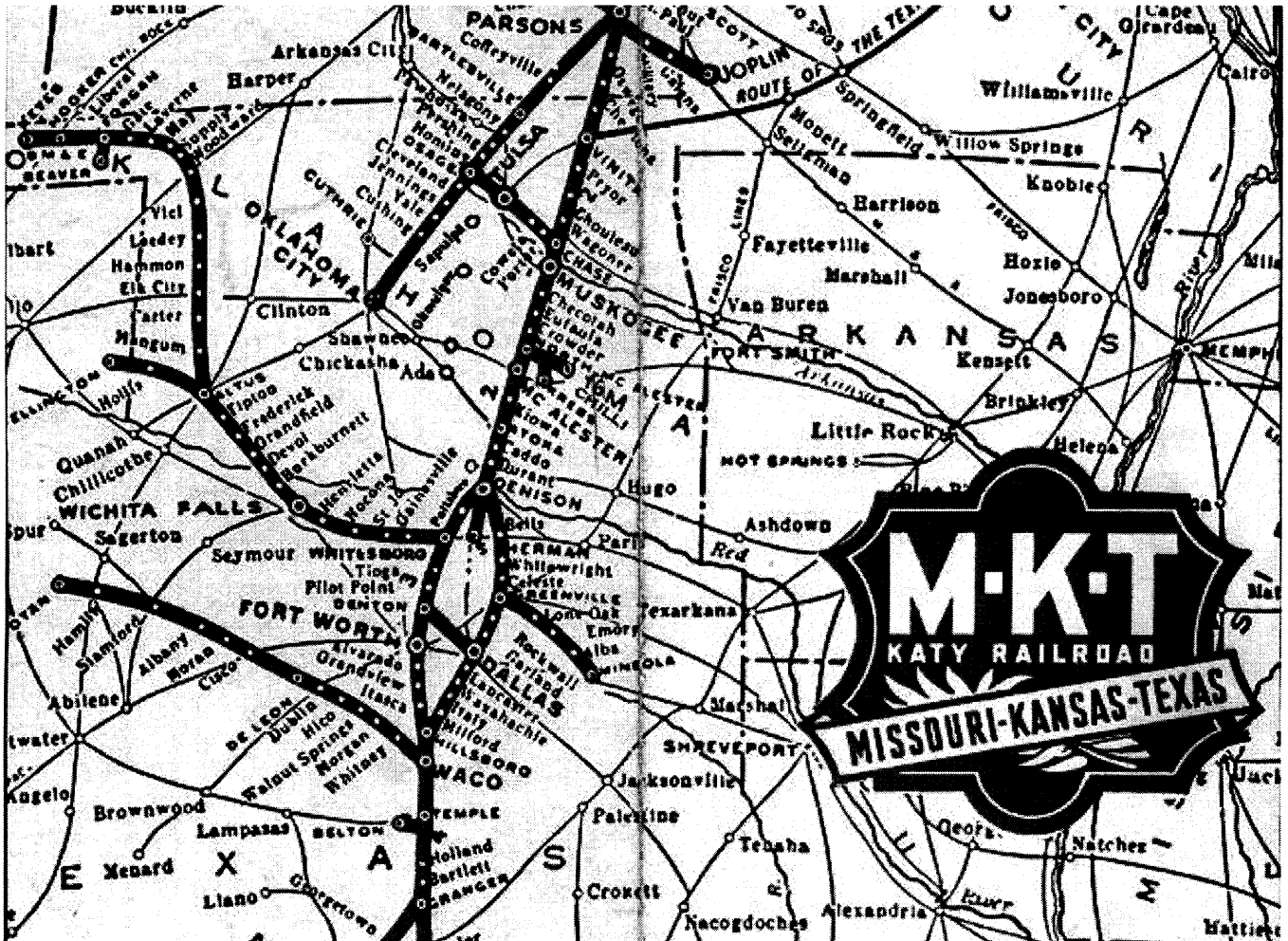
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replacement of the original asbestos-cement roof tiles with compositions shingles. The windows and doors are originals, as are the interior and exterior finishes. The building, reflecting its current use as a museum, houses many artifacts and pieces of furniture that are not associated with its history. These displays are not permanent, though, and do not detract from the ability of the depot to reflect its architectural or transportation significance. The building retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, association, and feeling. It has a diminished level of integrity of setting, with the removal of the tracks, but the overall setting is intact.



M-K-T system map, 1955

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## SIGNIFICANCE

The Vici M-K-T depot is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Its significance lies in the areas of transportation and commerce under Criterion A, and architecture under Criterion C. The depot is reflective of the place in history that the railroad played in Vici – a town that owes its very existence to the steel rails of the “iron horse.” The Wichita Falls & Northwestern (later Missouri-Kansas & Texas) railroad was the lifeblood of Vici, a town serving a large agricultural region. Architecturally, the depot remains a rare, intact example of a wooden combination depot, representative of the standard designs available in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

### Commerce & Transportation

Vici is a railroad town. It owes its present location and continued existence to the construction of the Wichita Falls and Northwestern Railroad. The depot constructed by this railroad, subsequently acquired by the Missouri Kansas & Texas railroad, stands as a reminder of Vici's importance as a shipping center for agricultural and mineral products. The depot is the embodiment of the town's lifeblood over a span of four decades, its connection to the outside world, a center for news.

Dewey County is situated in west central Oklahoma, and is composed of the same 977 square miles that had been Dewey County, Oklahoma Territory. Dewey County was forged from a portion of the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands that opened for white settlement on April 19, 1892. Named after Admiral George Dewey, it has its county seat in Taloga. The South Canadian River snaking through it from east to west. Initial settlements in the county included Aledo, Butte, Camargo, Lenora, Raymond, Rhea, Riley and Taloga. The economy and the coming of the railroad changed the face of the county; towns disappeared and new towns grew. Today, the current towns in Dewey County are Camargo, Leedey, Lenora, Oakwood, Putnam, Seiling, Taloga and Vici.

The town of Vici had humble beginnings, but they were not located where Vici stands today. The town began as a chartered post office serving settlers of the area. Albert H. Vincent received a certificate on February 1, 1899 from President Theodore Roosevelt to create a post office about two and a half miles southeast of the current town's location. Vincent's settlement was called Ussery Flats. The name Vici, from the famous words of Julius Caesar, “*Veni, Vedi, Vici*” meaning “I came, I saw, I conquered,” was suggested by the Government, so the town was renamed. Of course, the local pronunciation differs from Caesar's Latin; townsfolk pronounce it with long “i”s.

By 1901, the town of Vici was on its second location,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile southeast of the current town. The settlement included the Vici post office, along with the community's one room school a hardware store, a hotel, a blacksmith shop and a weekly newspaper, the “Vici Visitor.” A tornado in 1908 devastated the small community, but rebuilding began soon. Businesses, homes, and a new school were constructed.

As the fortunes of the town of Vici waxed and waned, an event was brewing far to the south that would settle its future. In Wichita Falls, Texas, J. A. Kemp and Frank Kell of the Wichita Fall Railroad Company were being wooed by the leaders of a number of western Oklahoma towns. In 1907, Kemp and Kell constructed a line from Wichita Falls across the Red River and into the Big pasture, terminating at Frederick. While Kemp and Kell had no plans to push further north with this line, dubbed



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the Wichita Falls & Northwestern, they were not adverse to listening to proposals. In 1909, they decided to continue the line through Altus, to Mangum and Elk City, opening up a swath of southwestern Oklahoma to the Fort Worth market. It was the promise of the rich cotton, wheat and broomcorn fields that lured the railroad. Even as the tracks were completed to Elk City in 1910, the decision was made to push further north, to Hammon in Custer County, on to Woodward, then into the Oklahoma panhandle to terminate at Forgan, a town platted by Kemp and Kell. In June, 1911, the board of directors authorized bonds to continue the line.

A common occurrence along the WF & NW lines into Oklahoma was the creation of "new" towns. As the railroad survey approached established settlements, the line might miss the existing settlement by a mile or so. Kemp and Kell would then survey and file a plat for a new town, near the old town. In most cases, such as in Hammon and Camargo, citizens would move to the "new" town, dragging along their homes and business buildings along with the town name. Such was the case with Vici.

In the three years since the 1908 tornado had wiped out the village of Vici, buildings were rebuilt. These buildings were moved over a mile to the new townsite as the railroad construction gangs moved ever closer to the newly-platted town. Two construction crews were working on the railroad – one working north from Hammon and one working south from Woodward. It was the Woodward gang that reached the Vici area first.

Interestingly, the construction gang on the Woodward to the South Canadian River section was composed of Black workers from east Texas. The workers were segregated from the locals as the crew moved south. The line moving north from Hammon and the line moving south from Woodward met between Camargo and Vici in April, 1912. The celebration was tempered by the news of the *Titanic's* sinking on April 15. While the towns along the line celebrated the coming of the railroad as it entered each town, the official opening occurred on May 9, 1912, when a passenger train from Wichita Falls, Texas entered Woodward, Oklahoma.

The effect of this railroad on the local economies of each town and on the overall economy of the region cannot be overestimated. Newspaper accounts touted the rich agricultural fields that could soon convey their yields more efficiently to market. The north/south running WF & NW line connected to four different east/west lines, allowing shipping not only to Wichita Falls but also to Oklahoma City. The *Daily Oklahoman* touted in a November 27, 1911 article the benefits of the line once opened. Land values were on the rise and the easy access to transportation attracted agriculturalists from other regions. American Express offices were ready to set up in each new station along the line, according to the article.

How did the coming of the WF & NW affect the locals? An article in the *Daily Oklahoman*, published March 22, 1912 quoted a Camargo businessman: "I...stocked my store with goods bought at Kansas City and Wichita. What I could buy in Wichita I freighted in from Woodward at 40 cents per hundred, at a material advantage over Oklahoma City. With the rail connection through Elk City and Hammon I will have a better rate from Oklahoma City than from Wichita." The merchant, a Mr. Secrest, later remarked on conditions in Dewey County prior to the construction of the railroad: "Heretofore, Taloga, the county seat of Dewey County, has had to freight everything in from Woodward, fifty miles north, or Orient, about half that distance. The roads in both directions are very bad. With the railroad built into Camargo the haul to Taloga will be reduced to twenty-three miles and the roads are much better."

In Vici, the story was much the same. Regional trade relied on wagons going overland on poor roads.

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Direct access to Woodward or to Elk City, with their connections to other trunk line railroads, opened up a new market for goods and travelers going in both directions. The WF & NW railroad pushed into Vici in late March, 1912. A month later, the town was connected to the state capital. Noted an article in the *Daily Oklahoman* on March 23, 1912, the effects of the railroad went both ways: "Iron rails in the western part of this state have connected this city with a section that has not been accessible to the jobbers of Oklahoma City. The rails of the Wichita Falls & Northwestern road cross the Rock Island at Elk City and make it possible for the merchants of Oklahoma City to reach many new customers... And from the new territory now available will come trainloads of grain and livestock to this market. While the road was built from Wichita Falls, Texas, into a fertile part of Oklahoma for the purpose of securing business for Texas cities, there is enough business for all and Oklahoma City will get its proper share." Whether connected to Wichita Falls, Texas, or the state capital, Vici now had an outlet to large markets, adding to its growth potential. From a village of fewer than 100 persons by 1930, there were 640 residents of the town.

The WF & NW had a long-time relationship with the MK&T railroad (Missouri Kansas & Texas). The MK&T leases trackage near Wichita Falls and ran passenger service from there to Fort Worth. The first passenger train on the newly completed WF & NW line to Woodward was pulled by a leased MK&T locomotive.

In 1910, the MK&T began to make overtures to Kemp and Kell for the acquisition of the WF & NW line, as well as their other Wichita Falls lines. The MK&T, commonly called the Katy, did acquire the capital stock of the WF & NW by the end of 1911, but the Wichita Falls Lines still remained as their own corporate entities. Convoluted corporate laws in Texas prevented the MK&T from assuming direct control over the Wichita Falls lines, but it did gain effective control by 1914. The operations of the lines, including those in Oklahoma, were included in the MK&T's annual reports, although they were still technically owned by the WF & NW. The Katy, in purchasing the WF & NW and other railroads, overextended itself and went into receivership in 1915. Years of wrangling between the courts, the stock and bondholders, the receivers, and the MK&T were lessened by President Woodrow Wilson's federalization of the country's railroads in December, 1917. All during this time, the WF & NW branch of the Katy lines proved to be the most valuable. A complete reorganization of the MK&T, which included selling off some of the smaller branch lines, occurred in 1922/1923. The MK&T emerged as the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, or M-K-T. The WF & NW bond owners were issued new bonds with M-K-T being the corporate owner. The Wichita Falls and Northwestern ceased to exist as a corporate entity.

The railroad is responsible for the location and continued life of the town of Vici. Formerly an isolated hamlet, little more than a cluster of buildings along a rough trail, the town grew steadily after the coming of the railroad and the decision to locate a depot there. Towns without rail lines died; Cestos, a bustling town east of Vici, withered and died when the WF & NW passed well to its west. Town on the rail lines, but without depots suffered; Trail, located south of the river, did not get a permanent depot, only a small shed for freight storage. It withered away, attracting no new business concerns and no new residents.

**Architecture**

The depot constructed by the Wichita Falls and Northwestern in Vici is a standard combination depot. It combines the functions of passenger and freight service under one roof. Waiting rooms for passengers and an office for the railroad agent were usually located at one end of the depot, while the balance was dedicated to baggage and freight. An engineer with the Lehigh Valley Railroad wrote in

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1893 that combination depots should be “used on railroads at locations of minor importance where the amount of freight or the volume of passenger business does not warrant the construction of a separate freight-house or a separate passenger depot.” In the case of Vici, Kemp and Kell adhered to this dictum. Notes H. Roger Grant and Charles Bohi in their book, The Country Railroad Station in America, railroad men and town promoters “opposed a building too large for local needs. The tenuous nature of towns in the region, therefore, partially explains the popularity of the cheap wooden combination station constructed to standardized plans.”

The Vici depot was constructed as the tracks were laid through the townsite. It officially opened on April 14, 1912, but dedication was postponed until April 24, due to the tragedy of the *Titanic* sinking. The station was constructed to conform to Oklahoma’s Jim Crow laws concerning the segregation of public transportation facilities. In addition to a commodious “white” waiting room, a separate “colored” waiting room was included in the plans, although there were no blacks living in Vici or the surrounding area, save for the construction crew that was building the railroad. The depot’s plan is not dissimilar to most frame combination depots; the difference in them is usually in the details on the exterior, the paint scheme and minor variations of layout. Each railroad had its own stock plans.

The Wichita Falls and Northwestern Railroad constructed a number of depots as it pushed north from Altus to Forgan. Dewey County was the recipient of four stops on the route: Leedy, Trail, Camargo, and Vici. Camargo was accorded a combination depot, although it was much smaller than the Vici depot. Currently, the Camargo depot sits in a park setting three blocks from its original location. The freight section has been removed, leaving a truncated passenger depot. Trail had only a small shed depot, with no facilities. Kemp and Kell elected not to develop a townsite at Trail, once an important stop on the Western Trail cattle trail. Without the influx of interest from the railroad, Trail devolved into a whistle stop, with no permanent facilities. It is unknown what depot type was constructed at Leedy. The depot there was removed years ago.

Even outside of Dewey County, there are few extant examples of wooden combination depots on the Wichita Falls and Northwestern line. Gate, Oklahoma, in the panhandle, retains its combination depot in its original site. Any other wooden depot on the line has either been demolished, removed, or altered. The brick depot in Altus is still extant and in good condition, but the Vici depot remains the only intact wooden combination depot on the line.

Throughout its struggles as an independent line and as a branch of the MK&T or M-K-T, the rail line that linked Vici to the outside world was a significant entity in keeping the town alive. While the tracks themselves served as the artery that brought life to and from the town, it was the depot that was the heart. Edwin Alexander, in his book Down at the Depot: American Railroad Stations from 1831-1920, said: “Since they were first built, country stations or depots were the focal point of most communities. They were a social center, the source of local news and gossip.”

Vici’s depot, now branded M-K-T, served as a hub of commerce and social activity in the town for many years. Within the first year of operation trains transported several hundred carloads of livestock, two hundred carloads of broomcorn, gasoline and wheat. Coal and bentonite from local mines was also shipped from the depot. Wheat was brought to the depot in trucks and wagons that lined up for blocks waiting to unload at the trackside grain elevators. Crews kept the wheat moving by working around the clock. Prior to the expansion of the grain elevators, during the rush of the harvest season the great bulk of the wheat was moved rather than stored. Initially the wheat was sent east, but gradually the majority was sent to mills in Oklahoma and Texas and the Gulf ports. Prior to the Depression, the

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livestock included hogs purchased at Vici then shipped to Woodward where they were sent to slaughter houses in Los Angeles, CA and Ft. Worth, TX. During the 1930s, great numbers of horses and mules were being shipped from the Vici depot due to the financial troubles incurred by local farmers. Poultry cars also left the Vici depot numerous times a year, until finally stopping at the end of the 1930s.

It was the post World War II era that saw the decline in importance of the railroad and the depot. Fewer and fewer trains passed through the town, and more and more cargo was transported via truck. Cargo receipts declined and the whole M-K-T system began a downward slide into bankruptcy. The company began to sell or abandon sections of the system.

Abandonment applications led to the loss of over 330 miles of rails in Oklahoma in the 1970s when the Interstate Commerce Commission approved the KATY reducing most of its service in the western communities. At this time the railroad in Vici was carrying wheat only during the harvest time because the majority of the wheat from the elevators was shipped by heavy trucks. It was due to this consistent loss of business to heavy trucks that the Katy's last train came through Vici in 1971 and the tracks were torn up. The railroad line from Altus to Forgan, Oklahoma was officially granted abandonment in 1974. The depot and right of way was given over to the Vici Farmers Co-op, who, in turn, gave the depot to the KATY Historical Society, a group of locals interested in preserving this important link to the town's past.

**CONCLUSION**

The Vici M-K-T Depot served as a significant center for commerce, transportation and community identity. Construction of the railroad by the Wichita Falls and Northwestern Railroad through Dewey County is the reason Vici is located where it is and the reason it prospered while other nearby communities failed. The depot remains a rare example of a wood frame, combination type facility. The railroad, the depot, and the town survived the vicissitudes of economic turbulence first by the MK&T railroad, purchaser of the WF & NW, and then of the Great Depression. The depot itself, though, survived the abandonment of the rails it served and continues to be a building of note in the town of Vici. Utilized as a museum dedicated to the history of the town and the railroad that created it, the Vici M-K-T Depot continues to play a significant role in the life and memory of Vici.

The depot retains excellent integrity and reflects its significance as a rare surviving example of a wood frame combination depot in Dewey County. It is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C. It is also eligible under Criterion A, for the depot's role in the commercial and transportation history of the town of Vici. The period of significance is from the construction of the depot in 1912 until 1945, when traffic on the rail line began its steady slide downward.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Beginning at a point 120' south of the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Houser Street, proceed southeast 120 degrees for a distance of 220'. Then south 60', then northwest at a heading of 300 degrees 250' to Houser Street, then north 60' to point of beginning.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This boundary includes the depot and a portion of the rail yard historically associated with the depot.